

C4/-

Admiral Matthews's  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE

Action in the *Mediterranean*,

As publish'd by AUTHORITY,

WHICH

Mr. LESTOCK in Part only has thought  
proper to Quote in his *Recapitulation*,  
before the Hon<sup>ble</sup> HOUSE of COMMONS,  
*April 9th 1745.*

*To which is added,*

M. D. COURT's Letter (the *French Ad-*  
miral) giving a very particular Relation  
of the whole Engagement and the  
Behaviour of Mr. MATTHEWS and  
Mr. LESTOCK, not yet publish'd in  
any of Mr. LESTOCK's Pieces.



L O N D O N :

Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in  
*Pater-noster-Row.* 1745.

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Printed by J. O. W. at the Office in

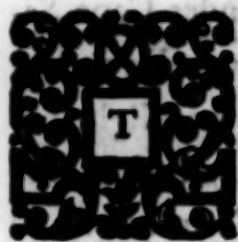
1742





Admiral *MATTHEWS's*  
ACCOUNT, &c.

*Mahon Harbour Feb. 3, 1743-4. O. S.*



THE *Somerſet*, *Dragon*, and  
*Warwick* join'd him ; on  
the 8th he received Ad-  
vice, that three Expreſſes  
came to *Toulon* the Day  
before, in a very ſhort Diſtance of  
Time one after the other : That he  
was likewiſe informed, that the Con-  
junct Fleet would put to Sea the next  
Morning : That between Three and Four  
that

that Afternoon, Capt. *Marsh*, of the *Winchelsea*, one of the Ships appointed to watch the Conjunct Fleet's Motions, made the Signal for some of the said Fleet being under Sail; upon which he made the Signal for Unmooring, and putting the Ships in a Condition for Action, which was done with the utmost Alacrity and Expedition: That in less than Half an Hour, they could see several of them from their Ships. That the Signal was made by Capt. *Marsh*, before it was dark, for seeing nineteen Sail, and about two in the Morning he sent the Admiral Word, that they anchored again under Cape *Sepet*: That as soon as it was Day they saw those, that came out the Night before, under Sail, and in a very little Time the rest coming out, their Number in all being 34: That the Admiral then got under Sail, the Wind blowing very fresh Westerly, expecting they would have come down to him; but soon found they had no such Intention, at least for that Day, for they kept plying to Windward,

ward, tho' there was all the Appearance of dirty Weather, and some of the Weathermost Ships were, at Night, Hull-to: That he therefore stood to and fro in the Bay till Night, and then anchored, having left Cruizers out to watch their Motions; during which the *Warwick* touched the Ground, but by starting 30 Tuns of Water, was got off about Nine that Night, without any other Damage.

That by Break of Day the next Morning, our People seeing from the Mast-head 15 Sail (the rest being hid by the Island of *Porquerole*) the Admiral immediately got under Way, having but little Wind, and that at North, and made all the Sail he could get to them, they standing at the same Time towards the *English* Fleet with a small Breeze Westerly: That after an Hour or two's Calm, there sprung up a small Breeze Easterly, by which Means they neared each other. That at the same Time the *Boyne* and *Chichester* appeared in Sight from under  
*Levant*



*Levant* Island, and the Easterly Wind prevailing; they, and a Tender with Provisions from *Mahon*, soon joined the Admiral, having had the good Fortune to fall in with the Land to the Eastward, without which they must have fallen into the Enemies Hands. That the Enemy brought-to in a Line of Battle, but for want of Wind, and having a very ugly Sea, it was Night before the Admiral could get near them, having had the Signal out all Day for the Line of Battle, and kept it out for some Time after it was Night. At Dusk he brought-to, within a little more than three Guns Shot of them, and ordered the *Essex* to lie a Mile to Leeward of him, and the *Winchelsea* a good Musket's Shot to Leeward of the *Essex*, to watch their Motions, and to make the proper Signals, and stand after them, in Case they should make Sail: That they were so near, that he could count the Enemies Ships after the Moon was down, but could not at the same Time see Vice-Admiral *Lestock* and his

his Squadron, he having brought-to so far to Windward, that, when it was dawning, and the Admiral had made Sail, and the Signal for the Line of Battle abreast, the Vice-Admiral was full five Miles a-stern of him : That the Enemy also made Sail, and went with their Top-sails and sometimes set their Fore-sails.

That about Eleven, the *Royal Oak* and two Tenders with Provisions from *Mabon* join'd the Fleet, having luckily fallen in to the Eastward.

That Rear-Admiral *Rowley* led the Van, but could never come near the *French* Squadron, as *M. de Court* would sometimes lie-to, as if he designed staying for them, but when they drew near him, he made Sail again, till at last he had left most of the *Spanish* Ships a good Way a-stern of him: That the Admiral was then fully convinced he never would come to a general Engagement, but judg'd his Design was, by his Way of

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acting,

acting, to draw him down the *Streights*: That about half an Hour after Eleven, the Admiral made the Signal for engaging, and soon after bore down upon the *Spanish* Admiral, and ordered the *Marlborough* to do the same: That the Action began about One: That the *Norfolk* engaged *M. Navarro*, (the *Spanish* Admiral's Second) who soon bore away, and never shortened Sail, whilst they could see her. The rest of the Admiral's Division ahead engaged those ahead. The *Marlborough* driving a little too near the Admiral, obliged him to fill his Sails to prevent her coming on board him. That the little Time *Mr. Matthews* was engaged, they greatly disabled his Masts and Rigging; and that having but little Wind, and an ugly Swell, his Mizzen Topsail handed, to prevent the Masts and Rigging tumbling about their Ears, hindered their working the Ship, tho' he reeved new Braces three several Times, so that he could not give the *Marlborough* the Assistance *Capt. Cornwall* wanted, whose



whose Behaviour is mentioned by Mr. *Matthews* to merit all imaginable Praise, and whose unfortunate Fate he greatly laments. That the Enemy were extremely well served with Gunners, the *French* training up a great Number of them, and having been exercising them at a Mark for upwards of three Months before the Engagement : That the *Marlborough's* Main-mast was brought to by the Board, as if it had been but a Twig ; and that the Admiral's Main-mast and his Bowsprit were shot thro' and thro', and the former had only two Shrouds to support it, and all his Topmasts were wounded. That the Enemy fired chiefly at our Masts and Rigging ; for tho' the Admiral engaged within Pistol-shot, he had but nine Men killed outright, and forty wounded. That his Captain's Arm was shot off the first Broadside: That the *Spanish* Admiral's Ship, the *Real*, was totally disabled, and when Mr. *Matthews* attacked her Second, she soon bore away, and made all the Sail she had in her

Power to set. That he then made the Signal for the *Ann Galley* Fire-ship to burn the *Real*, but that her Commander was so tedious in priming her, and in coming down, that the four Ships a-stern got so near her, as to prevent her Success; when by some of their Shot, or some other unlucky Accident, she blew up (being then within Pistol-shot, or less, of the *Real*) with her Captain and several of her Men, and also the *Spanish* Admiral's great Launch full of Men, which had been sent to prevent the Fireship from boarding him. That the Admiral was himself, at the same Time, within Musket-shot of the *Real*, and was afterwards engaged within less than Musket-shot by the same four Ships, which passed by Mr. *Lestock*, which Ships the Rear of the Admiral's Division engaged, but at too great a Distance.

That the *Somerset*, *Princessa*, *Dragon*, *Bedford*, *Kingston*, and *Berwick*, engaged the rest of the *Spaniards* a-head : That  
 one

one Ship of Sixty Guns of the Enemies fell into our Hands, and that during this Time *M. de Court* let Rear-Admiral *Rowley* come a-long-side of him, when they had warm Work for near three Glasses, as had the *Princess-Caroline* ; That after that Time *M. de Court* set his Foresail and left Mr. *Rowley*, who was then engaged by the *French* Admiral's two Seconds, but not for above twenty Minutes, before they went off : That there were but three of the *French* Ships engaged, the rest kept their Wind in order to tack and weather us, but that our Van keeping the Wind of them, prevented their Design taking Place : That the Night coming on with little Wind and a very great Swell, hinder'd our improving the Advantage we had got ; and that the *Barfleur* had eighteen Men kill'd, and thirty eight wounded.

That notwithstanding the *French* tack'd upon Rear-Admiral *Rowley*, they did not think proper to engage him : They  
however

however retook the *Spanish* Ship, it being impossible to do any Thing with her, as she had not a Mast standing, and as it was near dark, and the whole *French* Squadron had tack'd upon them; that thereupon Capt. *Hawke* of the *Berwick* left her, but could not get his Lieutenant and Twenty three Men out of her, his first Lieutenant having done all he could to persuade the Men to quit her, but in vain.

That about Eight at Night, the Admiral shifted his Ship, and hoisted his Flag on board the *Ruffel*, Capt. *Long*, not caring (should there be an Engagement the next Morning) to risk the falling of all his Masts. That at Break of Day they saw the Enemy's Fleet again to Leeward of them, and found they had towed all the crippled Ships before the Wind all Night. The Admiral chased them again, the *French* lying in a Line of Battle to Windward of the *Spaniards*, most of them Hull-to; but as he drew near them, they made



made Sail, and left the disabled sixty Gun Ship. The Admiral then sent the *Essex* a-head, and ordered Capt. *Norris* to burn the said *Spanish* Ship, (not being able to spare any of his Squadron to carry her to *Minorca*) which Capt. *Norris* did, and she blew up about Half an Hour after Nine at Night. That there was great Reason to believe, that if there had been any Wind, the *French* would have left the *Spanish* crippled Ships, as most of them had suffered greatly.

That in the Afternoon Capt. *Watkins* of the *Burford* join'd the Fleet; he had been in *Hieres* Bay the Day before, and hearing the Report of Guns, and seeing the Smoak, he made directly for it.

That at Night the Admiral brought to, that the sternmost Ships might get up with him. That he saw the Enemy again the next Morning, but at a great Distance.

That

That after the Admiral had lost Sight of the Enemy's Fleet, and found all his Endeavours to rejoin them, or to procure Intelligence of them, ineffectual, (they being gone as he supposed, down the *Streights*) he labour'd for several Days, against contrary Winds and Storms, to get back to the Bay of *Hieres*, which however he found impracticable, and was obliged to put into *Port Mabon*, where he was at Anchor on the 29th past, and propos'd to get again to Sea the first Moment that the necessary Reparations could be made of the Damages sustained by several of his Ships, as well in the Engagement with the *French* and *Spanish* Fleets, as in the constant Storms and foul Weather he had since met with.

As the Admiral had not then had his Returns from the several Captains, who were engaged, of the Loss they might sustain in the Action, he was not able to send the Particulars by this Courier.

All

All that he mentions upon that Head, besides what is above, is, that the *Marlborough* lost in the Action 43 Men, her Captain and Master included, had 90 wounded, who had been sent to the Hospital in *Minorca*, and 30 slightly wounded, who remained on board, and would soon be able to do their Duty.

*The famous LETTER from M. de Court, late Commander of the French Fleet at Toulon, to the Bp. of Rennes, Ambassador from the Crown of France at the Court of Spain, in relation to the Sea Fight on Feb. 22, 1744.*

**I**T is well known, my Lord, that the Sea Officers in the Service of *Spain*, have been for a long Time a good deal out of Humour with *France*; and that so long ago as the Year 1741, I had the

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good

good Fortune actually to save the *Spanish* Squadron under the Command of M. *Navarro*; and I sav'd it, in Spite of all that Officer could do; who, out of mere Affectation, stood out to Sea, in fight of Admiral *Haddock*; tho' he very well knew that it was my Order to keep within Sight of the Land; and that I was not bound to hazard the Squadron under my Command for the Sake of braving the *English*, under an Admiral whose Courage and Conduct were not then to be question'd; having appeared on all Occasions, even to the *Spaniards* themselves, not capable of Censure only, but above Suspicion.

As to the late Engagement, I must observe, that the Order of Battle in a Navy, signifies a continued Line of all the Vessels that compose that Navy; which ought to sail as close to each other as conveniently they can. This Line is divided into three Squadrons; the first call'd, the Van-guard; the second, the Corps de Battaille, because in the Center; and



and the third, the Rear-guard. The Commander in Chief, in the Day of Action, is always in the Center of the Corps de Bataille; but it is to be observed, that there is no Interval, no Distinction between these Squadrons, except what arises from the Admiral's Flag, and the Colours of the other Ships belonging to each Division. This ought to have been the Order of the combined Fleets of *France* and *Spain*; and such, indeed, it was of the Van, and of the Corps de Bataille, but not of the Rear-guard. At the Beginning of the Battle I saw only the *Orient* following the *Serious*, and the *America*, which followed the *Orient*, which were in their proper Posts; there was a great Void between this last Ship and those that preceded the *Royal Philip*, [*Real*]; and a much greater between those that followed her; and this Confusion induc'd Admiral *Matthews*, who was on the very Point of attacking the *French* Admiral, to tack, with the strongest Ships,

to surround the *Royal Philip*, [*Real*], and the four Ships with her,

As soon as the Battle began between the *English* and the *Spaniards*, the *French* found themselves fronting Part of the Corps de Battaille, and the whole Van-guard of the *English* Navy. In a Quarter of an Hour's Time the *America*, the *Orient*, the *S. Esprit*, the *Terrible*, and even the *Ferme*, which was one of my Seconds, were all engag'd; it is visible, that in such a Situation it could not be expected that a *French* Admiral should go to the Assistance of the *Spaniards*; neither could the Van-guard of the Fleet do it, without running the Hazard of being surrounded by the Van-guard of the *English*, which had the Wind of them: But as soon as the *English* left me, I drew together all the Ships of both Squadrons, and sail'd immediately to the Assistance of the *Royal Philip*; in doing which, I was exposed to the Fire of the whole *English* Line; but, happily, the *English* did

did not punish my Rashness as it deserv'd. Afterwards I lay between the *Spanish* Squadron and the Enemy all Night; which gave M. *Navarro* time to repair, and carry off all his damag'd Ships, which otherwise he never could have done.

I should be glad, my Lord, to know the Reason why such an Outcry should be set up against me, for leaving the *Spaniards* to be beat to Pieces, when Part of my Squadron was actually engaged, and the Rest expected to be engaged every Moment; at the same Time that *we* bear not one Word about the \* five Spanish Ships of that *Amiral's* Squadron, which never made the least Effort to support him? It was not I, my Lord, who forced M. *Navarro* to † fight against all the Rules of War

\* The Narrative of the Proceedings of his Majesty's Fleet, &c. by a Sea Officer, has the like Observations in Favour of Vice-Admiral *Lestock*, who was blamed by some Captains that were able to take a greater Share in the Action than they did.

† This Charge is insinuated against the *English* Admiral by a Sea Officer.

*War and Prudence*; it was not I who separated his Ships from him, and threw him in Danger; but after he had taken so much Pains, in spite of all that I could do, to get himself handsomely beat, it was I that came to his Assistance, and gave him an Opportunity of getting away, which otherwise he never could have had; and in return, the five Spanish Captains, either to hide their own Cowardice, or to cover their ill Conduct, raised † a Clamour, not only against me, but all the whole French Nation, as if we were all Traitors, and had formed a Design, nay, and executed it too, as far as was in our Power, of betraying and sacrificing them to the English; whereas the Truth of the Matter is, if they were sacrificed, it was only by their own Folly. Truth is Truth; and I appeal to the Spaniards, nay, to the English as well as the French, whether I have not stated the Fact fairly. The Reputation of

† In like Manner the Sea Officer abovemention'd, in his 6th Page, says, that on the Suspension of Mr. *Lestock*, a Clamour of Cowardice, and even Treachery, was raised by some People against him.



( 23 )

of an Officer is his All. I have lost the  
Command without repining; but I can  
never lose my Reputation but with my  
Life.

*I am, &c.*

DE COURT.

*F I N I S.*

